

Legislative Statement- Animal Welfare Amendment Bill

This legislative statement supports the third reading of the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill (the Bill) in the House.

Introduction

1. The objective of the Bill is to ban the live export of cattle, deer, sheep and goats by ship from 30 April 2023.

Background

2. The Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) currently enables the exportation of cattle, deer, sheep, and goats, provided an Animal Welfare Export Certificate (AWEC) is obtained.
3. On 14 April 2021, Cabinet announced its decision to ban the export of livestock by sea and subsequently agreed to implement the ban by amending primary legislation. Cabinet agreed to a transition period of 24 months to wind down the trade, and for the ban to come into effect on 30 April 2023.
4. The Bill was referred to the Primary Production Committee in October 2021 and was reported back to this House in April 2022. The Committee received and considered 637 submissions and heard oral evidence from 33 of these submitters.
5. The Primary Production Select Committee examined consistency with principles of legislative quality as part of their consideration of the Bill. No issues were raised regarding the legislation's design to bring to the attention of the House. The votes were tied, and the Committee was unable to agree on whether the bill should be passed.

Key provisions of the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill

6. The Bill amends the Act to prohibit applications for, and the issue of, AWECs for the live export of cattle, deer, sheep and goats by ship.
7. The Bill contains transitional provisions to introduce the ban. Exports of cattle, deer, sheep and goats will still be permitted if the AWEC is issued prior to 30 April 2023 and the ship has started its voyage from a New Zealand port before this date. Otherwise, the AWEC will be revoked on 30 April 2023.
 - Applications for AWECs are granted or refused at the discretion of the Director-General of MPI (DG). If a decision has not been made by 30 April 2023, the application will be treated as withdrawn. Applications for AWECs that have been granted by the DG before 30 April 2023, but not issued, will be treated as refused.

Conclusion

8. By prohibiting the issuing of AWECs, this Bill has the effect of an absolute prohibition on these exports from 30 April 2023.